

final environmental impact statement  
wilderness recommendation



NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE / ALASKA

## ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

This section describes the proposed action and two alternatives for possible wilderness designation at Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. It also includes a map of lands considered for designation under each alternative, a scenario of possible developments and uses under each alternative, and a table summarizing those scenarios. The possible development and use scenarios are based on wilderness areas being considered under the alternatives, proposals in the general management plan, activities and developments identified by the public during the scoping process (see the "Consultation and Coordination" section for scoping information), potential activities or developments identified in ANILCA, and projections by the Park Service based on current trends in visitor use. Except for administrative facilities, the scenarios are not National Park Service proposals; rather they are our best professional judgments of the developments and uses that might occur in response to public interests and management needs in the next 30-40 years based on trends projected under each alternative to meet the needs of that objective. The scenarios have been developed for the purpose of analyzing possible environmental impacts in the FEIS to meet the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. A summary comparison of environmental impacts is presented at the end of the section.

### WILDERNESS SUITABILITY

Of the 4,045,300 acres within the park/preserve, about 2,619,550 acres (65 percent) were designated as wilderness under ANILCA, sec. 701. The existing wilderness area generally encompasses both sides of the Alaska Range, which runs north and south through the park/preserve.

Within the nonwilderness portion of the park/preserve there are several areas that are not eligible for wilderness designation based on the application of wilderness criteria, generally because of existing nonfederal landownership and/or development. These include Lake Clark itself; the Port Alsworth area; some small tract and regional and village corporation conveyances on and around Lake Clark and the lower Tazimina River drainage; and an estimated 95 percent of the 94 small tract selections (native allotments, homesites, trade and manufacturing sites, etc.) that have been patented or are expected to go to patent. These lands and waters, which total approximately 179,640 acres, have been eliminated from further wilderness consideration.

The remaining nonwilderness lands and waters within the park/preserve total approximately 1,240,280 acres. Of these lands and waters about 69,500 acres are privately owned. These private lands are suitable for wilderness designation because of their undeveloped character and natural values; however, they will only become eligible for designation if acquired by the federal government. In addition, approximately 262,420 acres have been selected by native regional and village corporations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. Selected lands will

remain in federal ownership until they are conveyed, and they are suitable for wilderness designation because they are undeveloped and retain their natural values. However, once they are conveyed, they will no longer be eligible for designation unless later acquired by the federal government. If any of these lands are not conveyed to private ownership, they will remain in federal ownership and will be considered for wilderness designation.

There is one existing mining claim group with nine unpatented claims on Portage Creek along the north shore of Lake Clark, and the owner has applied for a patent; these lands would only become suitable for wilderness if the National Park Service acquired and restored them sometime in the future.

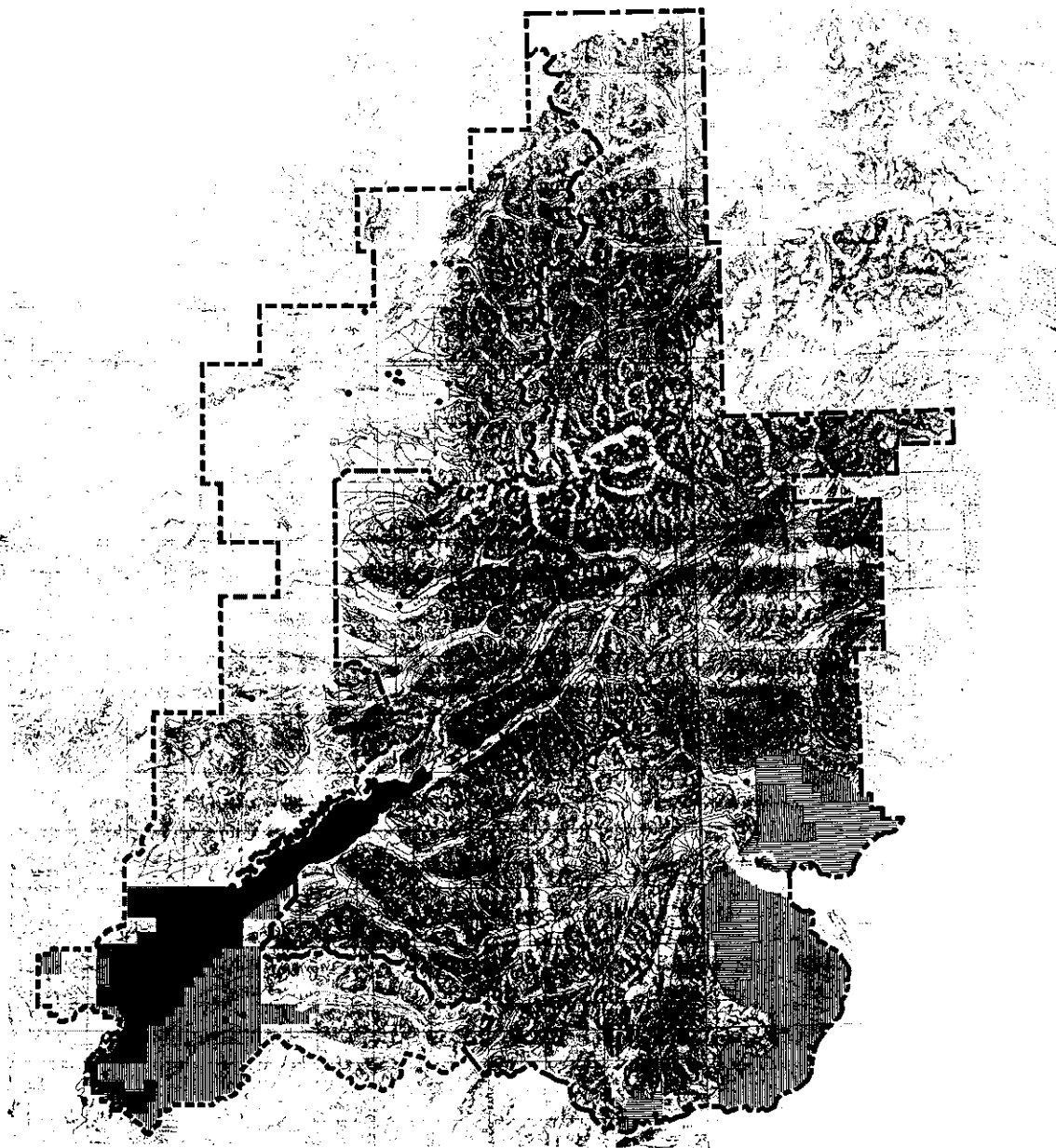
### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The total area determined to be suitable for possible wilderness recommendation encompasses about 1,240,280 acres, or 31 percent, of the park/preserve. This area encompasses the scenic lands and waters along the north and west sides of the park and preserve (a linear distance of about 120 miles) and in the southeast portion of the park between Chinitna Bay and Redoubt Point (a linear distance of about 60 miles). It includes the glaciated mountain terrain in the extreme northern portion of the park on the divide between the Kuskokwim, Skwentna, and Chilligan rivers; portions of the Stony, Telaquana, Mulchatna, Chilikadrotna (including the Lower Twin Lakes area), Little Mulchatna, and Kijik rivers, which generally include open, rolling tundra-covered foothills with spruce/birch forests along the major stream courses; two isolated forested parcels of federal land west of Lake Clark, one near the Chulitna River and the other northwest of Hoknede Mountain; most of the tundra and forest land within the Lower and Upper Tazimina lake drainages; the Black Peak area; the Crescent Lake area; portions on either side of the Crescent River drainage; and the majority of the coastal forested lands along Cook Inlet between Chinitna and Tuxedni bays. Following is a description of the five smaller areas that make up the total area being studied for wilderness designation.

Just below the northern boundary of the park are approximately 30,000 acres of glaciated mountain terrain with sparse alpine vegetation north of the divide between the drainages of the north-flowing Kuskokwim and Skwentna rivers and the east-flowing Chilligan River. This remote area abuts the northern boundary of the existing wilderness area.

A nearly township-sized area of land (19,000 acres) juts 8 or 9 miles east from the eastern wilderness boundary. It contains Black Peak in the southern portion and is cut by a southwest-flowing drainage of Bachatna Creek.

The southeast corner of the park contains approximately 253,000 acres extending from the north fork of the Crescent River valley



Study Area/Suitable for Wilderness

Not Suitable for Wilderness

Existing Wilderness

Park Boundary

Preserve Boundary

Land Selection, Native and State—includes subsurface and surface estates

Native and State-Owned Lands—includes subsurface and surface estates

Small Tract Entries—includes native allotments, homesteads, T&Ms, etc.

X Mining Claims

Note: Nonfederal lands within the study area would become eligible for wilderness designation only if acquired by the federal government.

0 5 10 15 MILES  
NORTH

## STUDY AREA

LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE / ALASKA  
U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service

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